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# Russia's High Hopes in Peru

Peru today is a land of political paradoxes, and the way these contradictions are resolved in the next year may have a far-reaching impact on the U.S.-Soviet balance of power in this hemisphere.

President Fernando Belaunde Terry is the most pro-U.S. leader Peru has had since 1968, when he was ousted by a military coup. He later regained power, but today the country is a haven for so many Soviet spies, military advisers and other personnel that they outnumber the total of U.S. military advisers in all of South America.

The nation of some 18 million is being tyrannized by a handful of fanatical Marxist guerrillas who call themselves Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and who, unlike their Central American counterparts, apparently spurn aid from Cuba and other communist countries.

Shining Path kept a low profile for 10 years under the military dictatorship, declaring war against the government only in 1980, after a free election put Belaunde back in power.

The Soviets, for their own devious reasons, have been quietly advising the Peruvian military on the best way to deal with the guerrillas, who idolize Mao Tse-tung.

My associate Dale Van Atta traveled to Peru to size up the situation in this strategic country, which the Soviets have set their sights on. He spoke

with Western intelligence sources in Lima and was shown top-secret CIA documents, including extremely sensitive satellite photographs of Peruvian military installations.

The Soviet Union's intentions in Peru are clear: they want to make the country their South American Cuba.

To further this ambitious plan, more than 550 Soviet personnel, by U.S. intelligence estimates, are stationed in Peru. At least 150 are military advisers, 90 of them with the army. Another 100 have been identified as agents of the KGB or the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence arm.

Incredibly, it was the same anti-democratic military men responsible for ousting Belaunde who brought in the Soviets. And the immediate cause was the Johnson administration's high-minded cutoff of arms sales to the new dictatorship. A secret Defense Intelligence Agency report explains:

"Prior to 1968, the Soviet presence was non-existent, but that year the United States suspended military sales to Peru and the Peruvians turned first to Western Europe and then to the Soviet Union for military hardware.

"Moscow's massive offerings of military equipment not readily available elsewhere, at extremely generous terms, drew a positive response from the Peruvians and set the stage for the arrival of Soviet advisers and the training of Peruvian military per-

sonnel in the Soviet Union."

Fortunately for U.S. hopes, the Peruvian military hasn't been won over entirely by the Soviet largesse. The navy's archconservative leadership refuses to buy much of anything from the Russians, and both the army and the air force have found fault with the hardware the Soviets have sold them.

The arms traffic has cost the Soviets a bundle, because Peru, its economy in shambles, has no means of paying for the more than \$1 billion worth of military gear it has bought from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Romania.

But strategically, the Kremlin figures it's worth the expense. Belaunde is stepping down next year, and the Soviets are hoping for a leftist victory in the election.

But the pragmatic Russians don't want the Shining Path leftists to take over Peru, any more than the Maoist guerrillas want the Soviets—whom they consider backsliders from true Marxism—running the country.

The result, according to intelligence sources, is that the Soviet military advisers are urging the Peruvian army to mount a Draconian anti-guerrilla campaign modeled after the Argentine military's "dirty war" in the late 1970s.

For the cynical Soviets, such a campaign could have important consequences. From more than 60 years of their own history, they know such repression can succeed in wiping out dissidence, so the Maoist rebels would be eliminated.

Furthermore, the repression could cause a popular backlash against the Belaunde government, weakening it just before the election—and giving victory to the left. That could set the stage for a time-honored Peruvian development: a military coup. And this time, the Soviets hope, the Peruvian military men would be more favorably disposed to Moscow than in the past.

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